

A

REVIEW

OF THE

Affairs of *FRANCE*:

With Observations on TRANSACTIONS at Home.

Tuesday, September 18. 1705.

I Have taken upon me, a little, to define what is, and what is not the Church of *England*, to avoid the Ambiguity of Terms, and the Snare which honest well-meaning Men may fall into.

A Gentleman, who stands by me at the Writing of this, tells me a very good Story upon this very Subject, being at a Fair in *Staffordshire*, or that way; there happens among 13 Gentlemen, that made up the Company, to be 10 *Roman* Catholics; one of the Protestants begins a Health ——— Viz. *Prosperity to the Church of England*; this Gentleman was concern'd at it, thinking he had intended to affront their Company; but he was more surpriz'd at it, when he found the first *Roman* Catholic pledge him freely, and go on with it to his next Companion, with a *Here's to the Prosperity of the Church of England* and so on of all the Rest ———

What was the meaning of it? The Case

was plain, Each Man drank it in their own Sence, *As the Parsons at Warwick took the Oaths*; the Protestant, meant the Protestant Church of *England*; the *Roman* Catholic, meant the Popish Church of *England*, and all agree in the Term: The Church of *England* Establish'd by Law, was the mighty Cry in former Days, in the Reign of King *Charles* the Second; So, said the Papist, *Are we*, and all your pretended Establishment are Heretical, Usurpations; the only True Establishment is ours, the Right is ours; you pray in our Churches; you dwell upon our Estates; you have invaded us by force, but your Laws are void; your Invasion is Unjust, and therefore you have no Right to call it an Establishment; the only Legal Establish'd Church, is the Church of *Rome*.

Come, in the next place to the *Jacobites*, and talk to them of the Church of *England*; Drink, Prosperity to the Church of *England*; they join with you, they pledge you with all their

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their Heart, they put it round with a cheerful Smile, and all cry out, they are for the Church of *England*; But what is this Church of *England*? Why, the true Church of *England* Establish'd by the Act of Uniformity, Establish'd in Loyalty, and pure Principles of Obedience; bound by Oaths of Allegiance to King *James*; and which does not think, they can be absolv'd or clear'd of that Oath, by any human Authority whatsoever: This is the Church of *England* Establish'd by Law; as for any other Church, or any other Establishment, it is only a powerful Schism; it is only a Right claim'd by Usurpation, and Invasion; and all the Compliance with it is a Schism, a Perjury, a Revolt, and a Rebellion; the Laws made since, are tainted with the same Crimes, are therefore Null and Void, and not at all Obligatory; the People may be deluded, but we are the Church of *England* Establish'd, and there can be no other; and on this Account they freely drink the Church's Health, and openly wish her Prosperity, talk of her with a great deal of Respect, cry out of her Danger, and join with all the Proposals that tend to pull down those that are her avowed Enemies.

At this Rate, where shall we fix the Matter? Where shall we find the Church of *England*? Let us come to a Standard, Who are meant by the Church of *England*, or we shall never understand one another? All sides will adhere to their Reservations, and talk according to their own Meaning; People will be Eternally deceiving one another, and no Body will be able to know what one another's Designs are.

For the Future, therefore, I would be glad, in order to set this Matter right, that all People would settle the Terms of Speech; let us come to a Head: When a Man means the Church of *England*, as now Establish'd, let him call it the Royal Church of *England*, or the Revolution Church of *England*; when he means the King *James's* Church of *England*, let him call it so, or call it the Abdicated Church, or the persecuted Church of *England*, or the oppress'd Church of *England*, or any thing that pleases himself; only be so honest as to give it some Mark of Distinction, that we may no more be

deceived in the Case, and led by false Light.

This must be the honestest way of dealing; for no Man can deny, but to own what we are talking of, is the most plain and sincere way of Dealing, favours more of Sincerity and Plainness, as scorning double Faces, and double Meanings; you that are for Popish Church of *England*, or for a Protestant Church of *England*, with a Popish King, let us know it; if it be not so bad that you must blush, stand up to it, and let the World know what you mean; but to speak Doubtfully and Ambiguously, is a Token of Fraud in the Intention, a True Badge of a Designing Hypocrite.

And now we come to the Point; The Church of *England* can be but one Individual, these Pretenders have no Right to Assume or Usurp her Title; the Church of *Rome* cannot be called the Church of *England*, any more than the *Brittans* (now *Welshmen*) can be call'd *English*; as to the Lands, the Churches, and the Property of the Nation, they were indeed once the *Papists*, but to say they are so still, is to say nothing; the *Welshmen* have the same Title, Gentlemen, to all your Estates, and they were *ouster'd* but by Usurpation and Unjust Violence.

Here's the *Jure Divino* of your Church, as well as Government; and all the Right you have to this Nation, begins in a Usurp'd Power, back'd by the Sword; a Sword of Oppression and Wrong, a Sword of Invasion and Robbery; *Are we the Men that talk of Inheritance, and Jure Divino? We Robb'd Honest Men of this Inheritance, and possess'd it a'ter them by the same Original Theft; to say our Possession is Jure Divino, is to Entitle God Almighty to the Sins of Men, and Gloss over our Vile Designs with the false Cover of Divine Authority, a Crime near of Kin to Blasphemy.*

To call the *Jacobite Dissenters* the Church of *England*, may have something more in it, were the Doctrines of Passive Obedience, and Non Resistance, real Fundamentals, either in Religion, or in Constitution; were it true, that an Oath to the Civil Power, respect'd not the Power but the Person; not the King, but the Man; and that keeping or break-

reaking it, Denominated the very Being and Essence of this Church.

But if this Depends upon the Common Laws of Nature, and Compacts of Allegiance and Protection, are mutually obligatory; then has the Church of *England* committed no Sin too much before, pretending to those Foolish Absurdities only excepted.

These Gentlemen then can no more call themselves the Church of *England*, Exclusive of all other, than this or that Sect of the *Dissenters*, can call themselves the *Dissenters*, Distinguish'd from all other; the most I can allow them in this Case, is to grant them a Party of Mistaken, Impos'd-upon Gentlemen, who adhere faintly to a Cause they had once some hope would have revived; but missing their End, are Martyrs now for a Cause they can no more Defend now with their Tongues, than they could before with their Hands.

These People pretending to be THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, and flying back to their Old Establishment, has something in it very reflecting upon the Church; as if her Establishment was at the Mercy of every Politick Court, or in the Hands of the Politicians, who could make Laws so binding, that the Church must be Confin'd to that Party, or particular Sect, those Laws directed; and this would drive her back to a Foundation wholly Humane.

The Establishment of the Church of *England*, is indeed by Humane Laws, and the very Meaning of the Word, in my Opinion, ought to Confute these Gentlemen; we Contend not for the Church it self so much, as for its *Establishment by Law*; and therefore the great Cry has been, the Church of *England* Establish'd by Law——Now this seems to raise a Question, Not what Church of *England*, But what Establishment, and by what Law? If they mean by the Laws of God, only the Establishment of the Church in that Sense, is above all the Pretences and Cavils we are now busie about.

If they mean Humane Laws, Acts of Parliament, and the like, the same Power that has made these Laws, is sufficient to repeal, alter, or make Additions to those Laws; for in all Ages of the World, that Power that

has a Right of Establishment, has by Consequence, a Right to rescind that Establishment; Laws can be repeal'd by no less force, than that which gave them, being that which has Power to Create, has Power to Destroy; without this, it could be no real Legislature, it would be a Mock Power in it self, and might be rid upon and Insulted by the very Laws of its own making.

If this be the Legal Establishment of the Church of *England*, then the same Power that made the first Establishment, has made the Present, and one is as Legal as the other.

If these Gentlemen fly to the Weak and Ridiculous Shift, which the *Popish* Artificers of Politicks frequently use, and say, This Power is Usurp'd, and therefore not Legal, no proper Legislature? I Answer.

If this be True, Why do these Gentlemen concern themselves in Elections? Why do they Clandestinely give their Votes? Why call it a Parliament? Why call the Sovereign a Queen, by Voting, or by Concerning themselves in Elections? They own the Representative, they help to form to be a Parliament; they fairly recognize the Authority, by assisting to form it; Will they Deny the Authority they help'd to make; first Vote for Members, then Deny them to be an Assembly? This has such Contradictions in it, as they can never get off from, and they must acknowledge, the Choice of the Members makes it a Legal Parliament, Capable not only of acting in Concurrence with a Sovereign, but even upon Emergencies, to make a Sovereign for that Concurrence.

Whatever Church is Settled by this Authority, is the Church of *England* Establish'd by Law; nor was there ever any Church of *England* in this Nation, than such as was thus Establish'd; by this Authority the present Church of *England* is Establish'd; and therefore is the only Legal Church in the Sense of National Establishment.

Whoever then Talk of the Church of *England*, as settled by former Establishments, either in *Popish*, or Abdicating Times, Delude themselves, prevaricate with the World, and form empty Notions to Deceive the People, are Enemies to the Kingdom, and ought to be treated like such.

No Wonder these Gentlemen rejoyce at the Successes of the *French*, and are fond of Reconciliation to them, both in Church and in Power; for they see plainly they have no other Force, and no other Friend to Depend upon, for that fanfy'd Restoration they flatter themselves with the hopes of.

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